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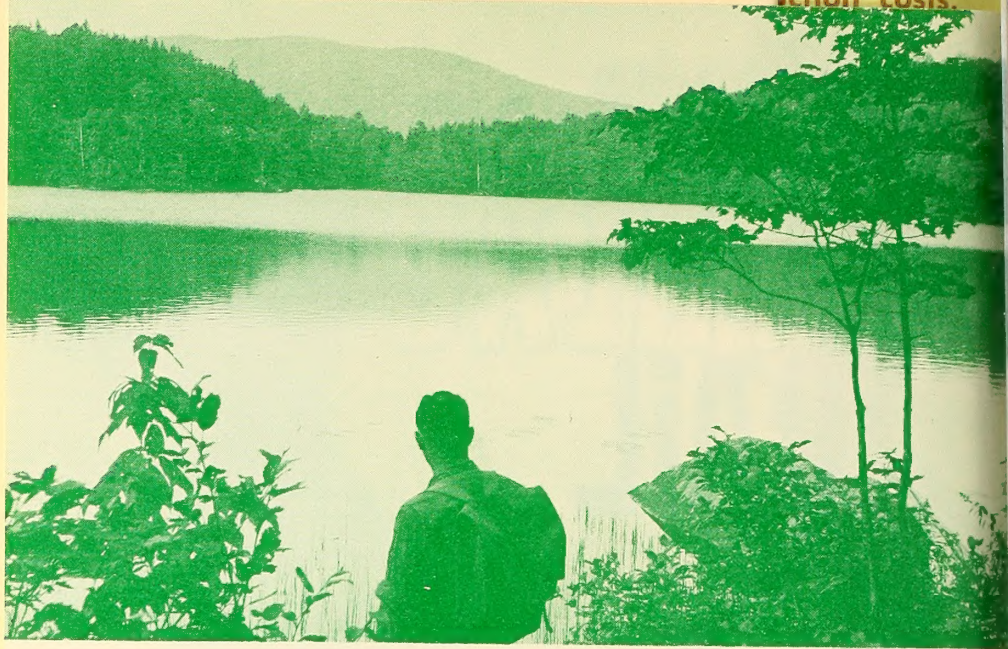
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THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL



Miscellaneous Publication No. 951

Forest Service • U.S. Department of Agriculture



The Appalachian Trail, extending 2,000 miles from Mt. Katahdin in Maine to Springer Mountain in Georgia, provides a unique opportunity for exploring the eastern United States. Its symbol leads the hiker through 8 National Forests, 2 National Parks, several State Forests and Parks, and many miles of private land in 13 States.

Envisioned first by Benton MacKaye, an early forester with the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and finally completed in 1937 by trail clubs which were established to cut new sections linking already existing trails, the Appalachian Trail is designed for foot travel. Along its route a person can take an hour's walk, a full day's hike, or an extended excursion. There are places where the novice can enjoy himself without losing track of familiar sights and sounds. There are mountains where only the experienced should go.

Highlights Along the Trail

Along the Trail the hiker can relax in the cool spruce and birch forests of New England. He can hike the steep trails in the White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire, crossing the boulder-strewn Presidential Range high above timberline and skirting the Great Gulf Wild Area near Mt. Washington.

In Vermont the Trail, after crossing the Connecticut River Valley and low hills, joins the Long Trail at Route U.S. 4. From there it twists and turns along the backbone of the State—the Green Mountains in a National Forest of the same name—to the Massachusetts line. The Long Trail, extending from Massachusetts to Canada, is maintained by the Green Mountain Club, 108 Merchants Row, Rutland, Vt.



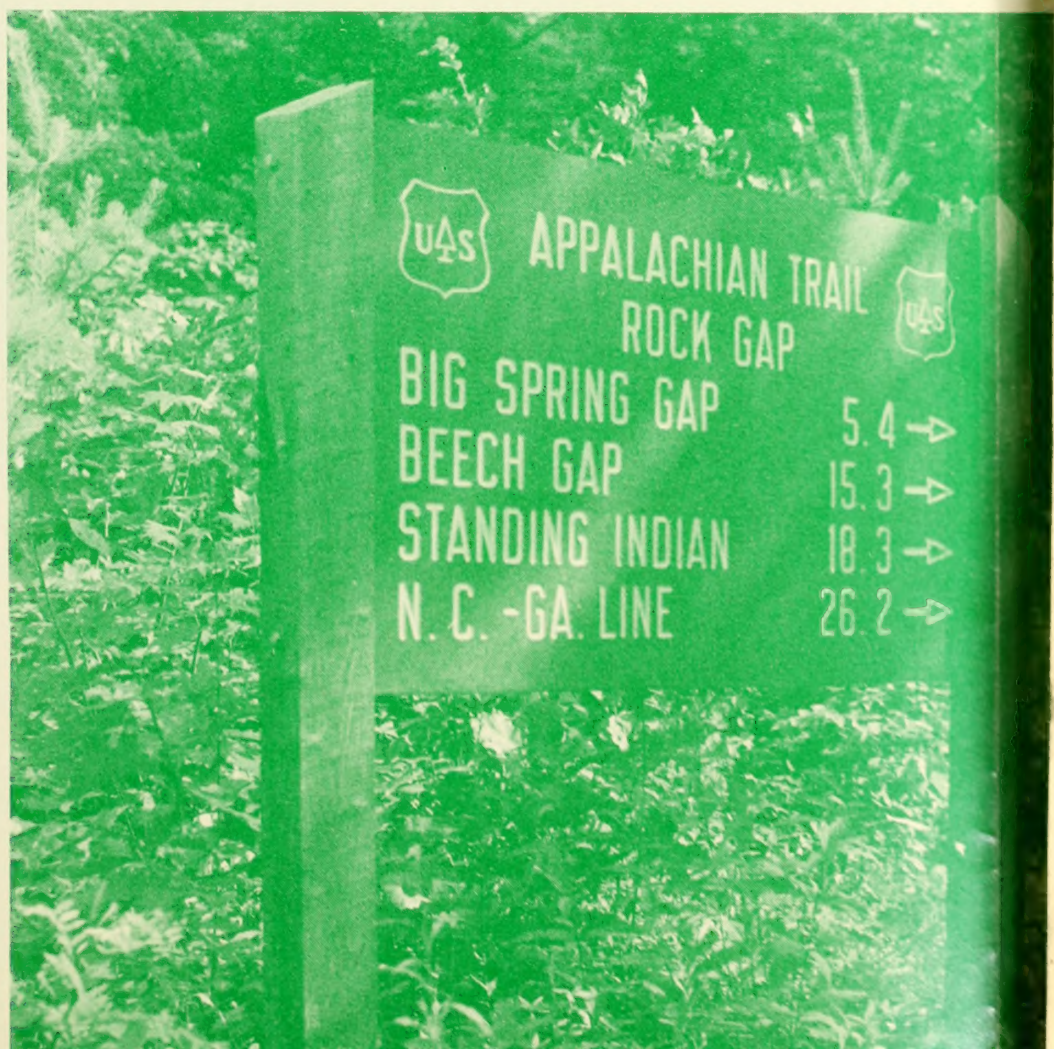
THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL



In Pennsylvania the hiker traverses the old coal and iron country, through the St. Anthonys Wilderness where an old railroad grade, foundations of houses, and coal diggings are mute reminders that here families lived and a town flourished. West of the Susquehanna he goes through Mont Alto State Forest, site of one of the first forestry schools in the country.

At the Potomac River he parallels the old Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, an early transportation route between Cumberland, Md., and Alexandria, Va. He passes within sight of Harpers Ferry in West Virginia where abolitionist John Brown staged his pre-Civil War raid.

In the Shenandoah National Park the Trail crisscrosses Skyline Drive for 94 miles. As it penetrates the George Washington National Forest in Virginia it becomes more remote and traverses a set of magnificent 4,000-foot peaks. Through the Jefferson National Forest it runs across valleys and along ridges bearing such descriptive names as Angels Rest, Dragons Tooth, and Dismal Peak.





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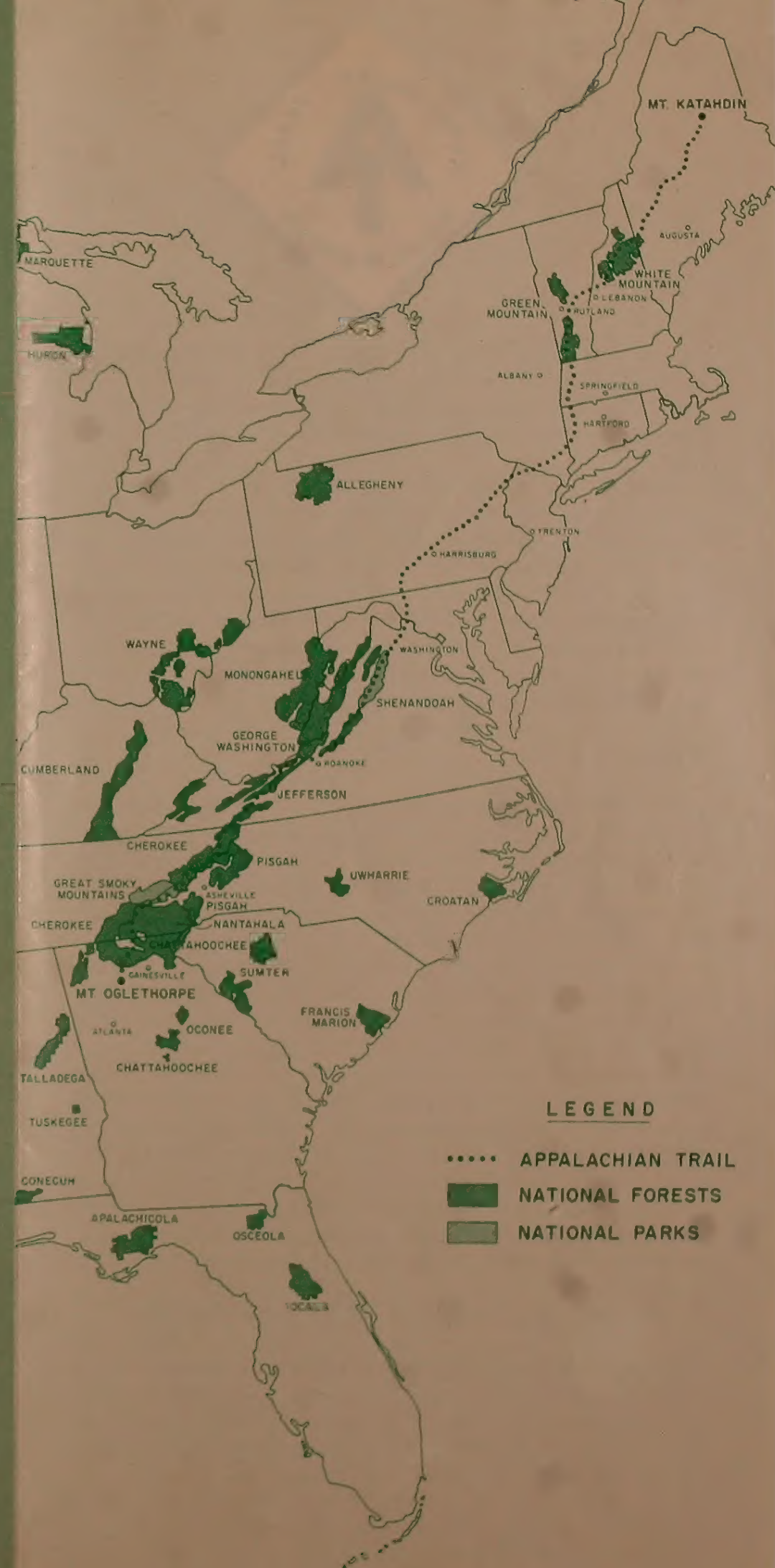
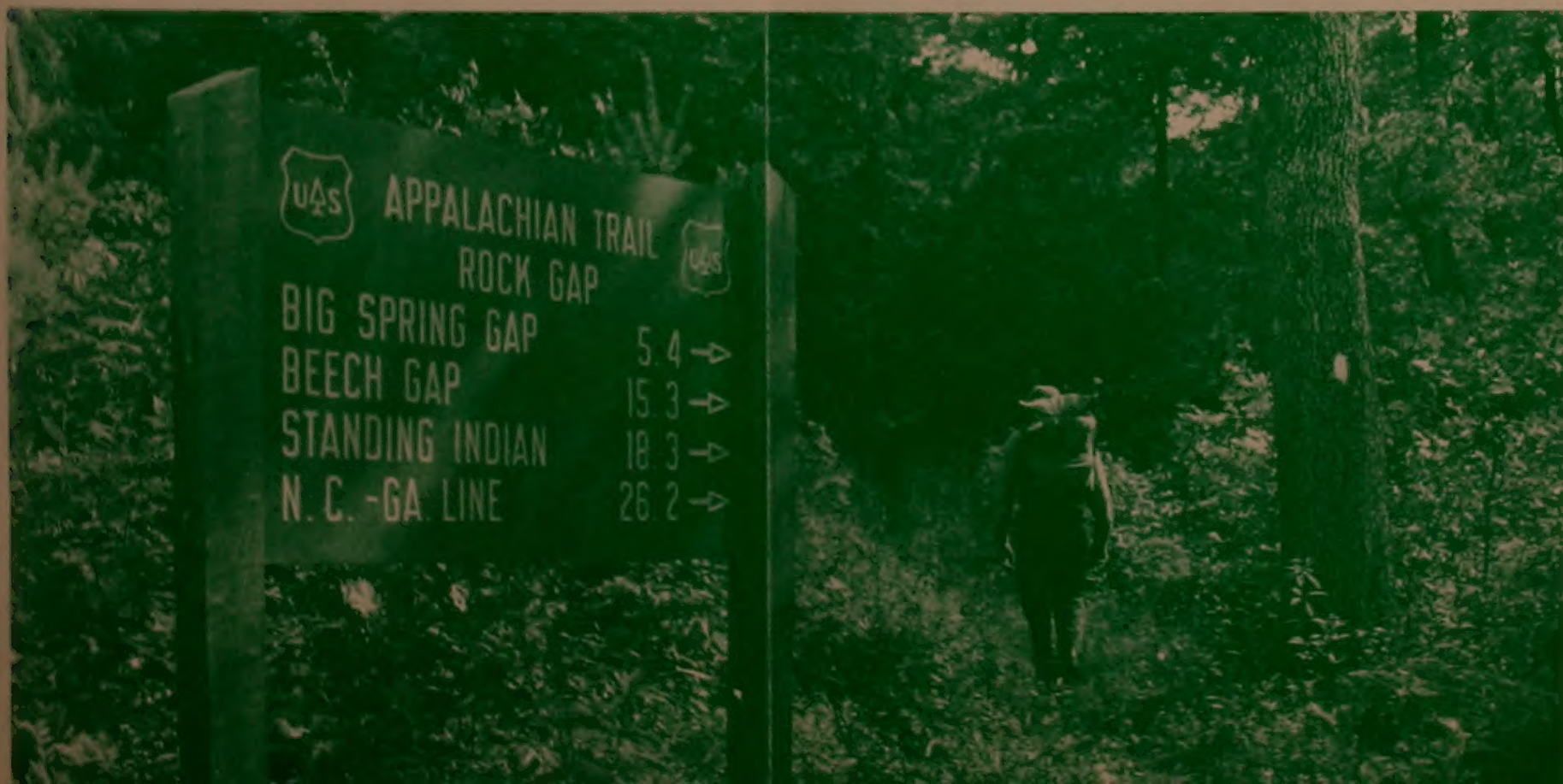
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Throughout the southern Appalachians the hiker sees the naked trunks of the once great American chestnut trees which succumbed to blight. In this country, too, are the balds—rolling mountains with grassy tops, green and restful to a footweary traveler.

Thus the trail winds over Roan Mountain on the boundary between the Pisgah National Forest in North Carolina and the Cherokee National Forest in Tennessee, where rhododendrons grow in great profusion. Through the Great Smoky Mountain National Park and into the Nantahala National Forest the Trail continues, ending finally on Springer Mountain in the Chattahoochee National Forest, near Mt. Oglethorpe.

Marking, Maintenance, and Protection

The hiker can identify the Appalachian Trail by the following symbol, usually painted in black on a diamond shaped piece of galvanized iron which is attached to a





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LEGEND

- APPALACHIAN TRAIL
- NATIONAL FORESTS
- NATIONAL PARKS



tree or post. Sometimes the symbol is painted on a regular trail sign. Much of the Trail is also marked by white paint blazes 2 inches wide and 6 inches long placed on trees and poles so that they are always within the hikers' sight.

Most of the maintenance of the Trail is volunteered, although portions are cleared by the Forest Service and National Park Service. Coordinating the work of the clubs and individuals working on the Trail is the Appalachian Trail Conference. To protect the Trail against incompatible developments within a mile on either side, the Conference has entered into agreements with the Forest Service, the National Park Service, and 13 of the 14 States through which the Trail passes.

Where To Stay

Ultimately the Appalachian Trail Conference hopes to have a string of three-sided shelters along the Trail where hikers may stop. The Forest Service has helped this program along by constructing 43 such shelters, mostly in the southern National Forests. The user must bring his own food, cooking equipment, and sleeping gear, and be prepared to cut his own fuelwood. Where there are gaps in the shelter chain, camp sites have been designated.

Other accommodations can be found for those not wanting to rough it. Hunting and fishing camps, known in Maine as sporting camps, take hikers. In the White Mountain National Forest the Appalachian Mountain Club maintains a chain of huts where hikers can obtain food and lodging at reasonable rates. At Sherburne Pass in Vermont, the Trail passes almost within arm's length of Long Trail Lodge. In Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club of Washington, D.C., maintains locked cabins which may be reserved.

FOR DETAILED INFORMATION

If your hiking is going to be extensive, get a guidebook which describes the trail and overnight accommodations. The Appalachian Trail Conference, 1916 Sunderland Place NW., Washington, D.C., issues maps and guides at a nominal price for all sections of the Trail except in the White Mountains. The Appalachian Mountain Club, 5 Joy Street, Boston, Mass., has the most comprehensive maps and guides of that section.

FOR SAFETY'S SAKE

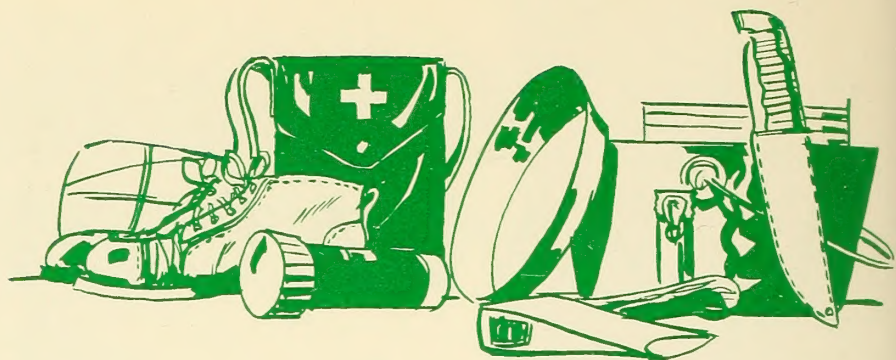
In the South, sections of the Appalachian Trail may become overgrown with summer brush and hard to follow. In New England a hot summer afternoon can turn into a cold rainy nightmare in a matter of minutes. Wear or carry clothes which can protect you against sudden cold, rain, briars, and poison ivy. Wear comfortable sturdy shoes. Take along basic first aid supplies.

Some of the Trail traverses extremely rough terrain and exposed mountain tops, so hikers are urged not to travel alone.

Parents should make sure that young people are with experienced leaders familiar with the territory and the idiosyncrasies of the weather. New England mountains may not seem high, but in winter they can be treacherous. Inexperienced hikers should stay at low elevations in winter.

Time your hike so you arrive at your destination before dark. If you are not an experienced mountaineer, or with one, be careful about hand-over-hand climbing on ledges; getting down is always harder. Build up to strenuous trips. Sudden overexertion may be permanently damaging.





Maps showing the route of the trail in the National Forests may be obtained from Forest Supervisors at the following addresses:

STATE	FOREST	ADDRESS
Georgia-----	Chattahoochee---	Gainesville
Tennessee-----	Cherokee-----	Cleveland
North Carolina--	Nantahala-----	Asheville
North Carolina--	Pisgah-----	Asheville
Virginia-----	Jefferson-----	Roanoke
Virginia-----	George Washing- ton	Harrisonburg
Vermont-----	Green Mountain--	Rutland
New Hampshire--	White Mountain--	Laconia



Hiking can be fun if you know the ropes. The Appalachian Trail, with its changing zones of plant, animal, and bird life and side trails inviting exploration, provides some of the best hiking in the country.

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